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CATF, CWC, AND AMPHIBIOUS DOCTRINE

BY

COMMANDER W. LEE HARRIS, JR.  
United States Navy

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CATF, CWC, AND AMPHIBIOUS DOCTRINE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: W. Lee Harris, CDR, USN

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One of the most complex aspects of amphibious operations is the command and control of such multi-service, multi-environment activities. The means to accomplish this most complex aspect of amphibious operations is the center of debate among both Navy and Marine Corps leaders. Current amphibious doctrine, as reflected in JCS Pub 3-02, evolved in the years between the two world wars and from the epic campaigns of World War II and Korea. Proponents claim this doctrine is time tested and written in the blood of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who fought in those battles. During non-amphibious fleet operations, today's Navy uses the Composite Warfare Commander concept outlined in Naval Warfare Publication (NWP) 10-1. Efforts are underway to combine these concepts to establish a viable doctrine for use in future amphibious operations. This paper examines the assignment of CATF to amphibious operations as well as the Navy's existing and proposed command and control concepts. The premise of the paper is that command and control in amphibious operations can be carried out using existing procedures. Amphibious doctrine is sound, and it is compatible with the CWC concept.

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## GLOSSARY

AAWC	ANTIAIR WARFARE COMMANDER
AMWC	AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE COMMANDER
AOA	AMPHIBIOUS OBJECTIVE AREA
AREC	AIR ELEMENT COORDINATOR
ARG	AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP
ASUWC	ANTISURFACE WARFARE COMMANDER
ASWC	ANTISUBMARINE WARFARE COMMANDER
ATF	AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCE
ATP	ALLIED TACTICAL PUBLICATION
CATF	COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCE
CINCLANTFLT	COMMANDER ATLANTIC FLEET
CLF	COMMANDER LANDING FORCE
COMNAVSURFLANT	COMMANDER NAVAL SURFACE FORCES, U.S. ATLANTIC FLEET
COMPHIBGRU	COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS GROUP
COMPHIBLANT	COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS FORCES, U.S. ATLANTIC FLEET
COMSECONDFLT	COMMANDER SECOND FLEET
COMTHIRDFLT	COMMANDER THIRD FLEET
CVBG	CARRIER BATTLE GROUP
CWC	COMPOSITE WARFARE COMMANDER
EWC	ELECTRONIC WARFARE COORDINATOR
HDC	HELICOPTER DIRECTION COORDINATOR
HEC	HELICOPTER ELEMENT COORDINATOR
LCC	AMPHIBIOUS COMMAND AND CONTROL SHIP
LGC	LANDING GROUP COMMANDER
MARG	MEDITERRANEAN AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP
MEB	MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE
MEF	MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
MEU	MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT
NWP	NAVAL WARFARE PUBLICATION
OPORDER	OPERATIONAL ORDER
OTC	OFFICER IN TACTICAL COMMAND
SACC	SUPPORTING ARMS COORDINATION CENTER
SEC	SUBMARINE ELEMENT COORDINATOR
STWC	STRIKE WARFARE COMMANDER
TACMEMO	TACTICAL MEMORANDUM
TACPHIBRON	TACTICAL AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON

# CATF, CWC, AND AMPHIBIOUS DOCTRINE

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Navy's amphibious might came into being as an emergency response to the strategic imperatives of World War II. Hugely successful though seagoing assault forces were, questions arose during the late 1940s as to the need for maintaining this unique capability in the post war navy. Indeed, before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, so distinguished a military figure as General Omar Bradley said that the day of the large scale amphibious invasion had already passed. These doubts were laid to rest by the stunning tactical success of the Inchon landing in September 1950. Subsequently, amphibious forces became an established part of the peacetime navy...<sup>1</sup>

Although no one argues its past value, few will champion the future utility of amphibious warfare.<sup>2</sup> Even after the Korean War, some tacticians concurred with the former JCS Chairman's view that due to the emergence of nuclear weapons, large scale amphibious assaults were a thing of the past.<sup>3</sup> This opinion was popular not only among some factions in the United States, but in Great Britain<sup>4</sup> and the Soviet Union<sup>5</sup> as well.

The period after World War II was not the first time the value of amphibious warfare was questioned. The noted naval historian Samuel E. Morison points out that the demise of amphibious warfare was predicted after World War I as well:



This, the most ancient form of naval warfare, in which the Greeks, Phoenicians and Norsemen distinguished themselves, became discredited in World War I and for years thereafter was neglected by all naval powers except Japan. This neglect arose from the misleading claims made by air-power fanatics, and from the costly failure of the Dardanelles operation in 1915. Both combined to create the impression that land-based aircraft and modern coast defense guns would slaughter any landing force before it reached the beach.<sup>6</sup>

Obviously, amphibious warfare survived to play a significant role in World War II and continues to do so today. Amphibious forces have responded to over 100 crises in the past 45 years.<sup>7</sup> Today's responses and tactics, however, are not necessarily the same as they were in World War II. The perception of a traditional amphibious assault may change to one emphasizing "surprise and maneuver, on landing quickly where the enemy is absent or unprepared, blurring the traditional distinction between opposed and unopposed landings."<sup>8</sup> Modern technology affords the means to avoid the human wave assaults such as those conducted at Iwo Jima or during Operation Overlord in Normandy.<sup>9</sup> The advent of helicopters, LCAC, and tilt-rotor aircraft has ushered in a new era in amphibious warfare.

Prior to World War II, the United States did not maintain an amphibious fleet similar to the post war years. Although the size of the amphibious Navy has steadily declined since 1945, amphibious forces remain prepared to perform the following tasks in support of national objectives:

- Providing a forward deployed amphibious presence to add stability and to provide reassurance to an ally in an area of importance to the United States.

- Providing a cover force for evacuation of U.S. and perhaps allied citizens or, alternatively, conduct or assist in the evacuation.
- Providing initial security of a logistic entry point (port or airhead) required for support of a friendly government threatened from within.
- Conducting assault landings to restore or support a friendly government requesting assistance.
- Conducting assault landings in support of alliances.<sup>10</sup>

Recent world events in Eastern Europe coupled with President Bush's signing of the CFE agreement will inevitably lead to downsizing the American military and possibly to replacing the current military strategy of forward defense with one emphasizing CONUS based forces and flexible response. Should this occur, amphibious forces could play an even greater role in U.S. military strategy in the future.<sup>11</sup> As one British author writes: "In these circumstances, the inherent flexibility of amphibious forces becomes more important than ever."<sup>12</sup>

The successful accomplishment of the tasks above, or any other amphibious operation, "depends on the orchestrated application of virtually the entire array of naval power...(including) antiair and missile defenses, antisubmarine warfare, close air support, defense against missile boats, naval gunfire support, and mine countermeasures".<sup>13</sup> Today, however, senior naval tacticians do not agree how best to command this "array of naval power" in amphibious operations.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the U.S. Navy introduced a new command and control concept designed to ensure task force survival in a multi-threat environment involving reduced reaction times. As originally conceived, this Composite Warfare Commander (CWC) Concept, outlined in NWP 10-1, was defensive in nature and based upon the principle of command by negation. During non-amphibious operations, today's Navy uses this CWC concept.

Current amphibious doctrine, as reflected in JCS Pub 3-02, primarily evolved in the years between the two world wars and from the epic campaigns of World War II and the Korean War. Proponets claim this doctrine is time tested and written in the blood of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who fought those battles.

Efforts are underway to combine these doctrines to establish viable principles for use in future amphibious operations. The premise of this paper is that current amphibious doctrine and the CWC concept are compatible and that amphibious operations can be carried out using existing doctrine. This paper first reviews the assignment of CATF to amphibious operations. Secondly, command and control issues highlighted in recent fleet operations are examined, followed by an evaluation of COMTHIRDFLT's proposed solution combining the CWC concept and amphibious doctrine. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

## ENDNOTES

1. Merrill L. Bartlett, Assault from the Sea, p. 386.
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4. John Creswell, Generals and Admirals: The Story of Amphibious Command, pp. 184-186.
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6. Samuel E. Morison, The Two-Ocean War, p. 15.
7. A. M. Gray, "Reductions in Seapower", p. 2.
8. Fred E. Haynes, "What if there is never another opposed landing?", Amphibious Warfare Review, Fall 1987, p. 7.
9. Gray, p. 3.
10. Bartlett, pp. 397-398.
11. Mackubin T. Owens, "Force Planning in an Era of Uncertainty", Strategic Review, Spring 1990, pp. 19-20.
12. Evans, p. 207.
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## CHAPTER TWO

### ASSIGNMENT OF CATF

At the beginning of World War II, the Commanders of the Amphibious Task Forces (CATF) were carefully selected officers who were instrumental in pre-war preparations for amphibious operations. As the war progressed, the selection of these competent commanders proved invaluable to the success of campaigns conducted in both Europe and the Pacific.

RADM Richmond K. Turner was named CATF for the first major U.S. amphibious landing of the war at Guadalcanal. Prior to assuming command as Commander of the South Pacific Amphibious Force on 18 July 1942, RADM Turner was Director of War Plans at the Navy Department where he revised the "Rainbow Plans" for the war in the Pacific and became known as the "father of the Joint Chiefs of Staff".<sup>1</sup>

RADM Daniel E. Barbey commanded the Seventh Amphibious Force under General MacArthur. His assignments prior to this command were as chief of staff to the Commander, Training Force, Atlantic Fleet where he participated in all amphibious training exercises in the Atlantic in the years immediately preceding the war. Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he was transferred to the OPNAV staff where he established an amphibious warfare section whose functions included the coordination of all

training programs and the procurement of ships and craft required for large scale amphibious operations.<sup>2</sup>

RADM H. K. Hewitt was CATF for the first joint U.S. landing\* and the first major U.S. landing in the European theater of operations (Morocco). At the time, RADM Hewitt was also serving as Commander, Amphibious Forces, Atlantic (COMPHIBLANT), and the amphibious training for the North African landing force was directed from his headquarters.<sup>3</sup> After the war, it became standard procedure to assign COMPHIBLANT as CATF for large scale east coast amphibious operations.

In 1975, however, naval forces were divided into "type commands" where naval surface forces were grouped under one command, submarine forces under another, naval air under a third, and Fleet Marine forces under a fourth. COMPHIBLANT along with two other commands\*\* were subsumed into the type command called Commander, U.S. Naval Surface Forces, Atlantic Fleet, or COMNAVSURFLANT. At that time, COMNAVSURFLANT Oporder 2000 assigned CATF as indicated below and similar command relationships were established in the Pacific:<sup>4</sup>

<u>CATF</u>	<u>CLF</u>	<u>MAGTF</u> <u>SIZE</u>
COMNAVSURFLANT	CG II MEF	MEF
COMPHIBGRU TWO	CG FOURTH/SIXTH MEB	MEB
TACPHIBRON CDR	MEU CDR	MEU

-----  
\* The landing by RADM Turner at Guadalcanal two months earlier was conducted solely by marines and was not joint.

\*\* The other two commands were COMCRUDESANT and COMSERVLANT.

Although not in the Oporder, the Commanders of the Landing Forces (CLF) are added to clarify command relationships. In a Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), the commanders wear three stars; for a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), the commanders wear one star; for a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), the commanders are O-6s. Note that COMPHIBLANT was a three star billet when it was dissolved.

Since 1975, type commanders became immersed in ship operations, schedules, maintenance and repair and lost the ability to plan and conduct amphibious operations. CATF for a MEF size operation no longer was a leader in the amphibious community at the forefront of this complex warfare specialty. In recognition of this fact, the current COMNAVSURFLANT Oporder 2000 designates the Amphibious Group Commander (COMPHIBGRU TWO) as CATF for both MEF and MEB size operations (although a different appendix to the same oporder states that CINCLANTFLT will designate CATF upon execution of operations or contingency plans in which the landing force consists of a MEF).<sup>5</sup>

Assignment of the Amphibious Group Commander as CATF, however, does not adequately resolve the problem of command for MEF operations. From the time landing forces embark on amphibious ships until control is passed ashore after the amphibious assault, CLF is subordinate to CATF.<sup>6</sup> A standing oporder institutionalizing the practice of placing a three star general subordinate to a one star admiral is not sound.

A likely scenario for future operations is that a three star fleet commander will be assigned duties as CATF for MEF size operations. While numbered fleet commanders are at the leading edge of the development of modern naval tactics, they may not be the best choice for selection as CATF for the following reasons:

a. They do not have a staff trained in amphibious doctrine capable of planning and conducting an amphibious operation.

b. Traditionally, the fleet commander opts to remain in close proximity to the carriers which may be hundreds of miles from the amphibious forces and CLF. CATF and CLF must be collocated in order to conduct the detailed planning required in JCS Pub 3 02 essential for a successful amphibious operation.

Although World War II type assaults may be a thing of the past, CATF and his staff must still possess the amphibious expertise and background to oversee the details of planning and executing amphibious operations.



## ENDNOTES

1. George C. Dyer, The Amphibians Came to Conquer, pp. 154, 199, 263.
2. Daniel E. Barbey, MacArthur's Amphibious Navy, pp. 13, 18, 19.
3. E. B. Potter, Sea Power: A Naval History, p. 569.
4. COMNAVSURFLANT OPORDER 2000 of 01 Jan 75, pp. C-14-1, C-14-2.
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## CHAPTER THREE

### RECENT OPERATIONS

While amphibious forces have been called to respond to numerous events worldwide since 1945, the controversy between CWC and amphibious doctrine is relatively new. As previously mentioned, the CWC concept was introduced as a defensive tactic designed to minimize response time in a multi-threat environment. It has been an evolutionary concept which has become more offensively oriented with the addition of strike warfare as a functional area.<sup>1</sup>

Operation Urgent Fury was the first instance in which the CWC concept and amphibious doctrine had their first mutual combat experience. The chief of staff of the amphibious forces participating in Urgent Fury gives an excellent account of the issues that surfaced as a result of this operation.<sup>2</sup> The following points from that account are relevant to this discussion:

1. Because of the crisis-action nature of Operation Urgent Fury which permitted only hours vice days or months for planning, no initiating directive was issued for the operation as per joint doctrine. The initiating directive is vital in that in addition to stating the mission, it performs the following three essential functions:<sup>3</sup>

a. Provides special instructions on command relationships between CATF and CLF, and among those officers and other participating commanders.

b. Establishes the Amphibious Objective Area (the AOA). Within the AOA boundaries, CATF has tactical command or control of all friendly forces, including his main assault force, advance forces, escorts, naval gunfire support ships, and all air assets, including those performing close air support and task force defensive air patrols.

c. Assigns supporting forces and explains command relationships by which their commanders will support the amphibious operation, both inside and beyond the AOA.

Armed with an Initiating Directive, a CATF of any paygrade has unique and wide-ranging authority which cuts across functional and service boundaries. He commands or controls every friendly asset inside the AOA.

2. Since there was no Initiating Directive, CATF was never designated, an AOA was not established, and the amphibious force commander (Captain Erie) was not given tactical command of the forces required to effectively accomplish his mission. For instance, Capt. Erie never had tactical command of the naval gunfire ships and the supporting commander could reassign those ships to another mission at any time. This situation was of

particular significance to the Army and Marine forces ashore whose lives and mission depend heavily on receiving fire support immediately upon request.

3. Despite the presence of both Army and Marine forces, CLF was never designated. Thus, throughout this joint operation there were effectively two commanders of separate assault forces. The amphibious force commander attempted to support both forces without any guidance regarding priority of efforts or command relationships.

Similar circumstances existed in Sixth Fleet when the same naval forces conducted operations off the coast of Lebanon in relief of the Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) whose battalion headquarters was bombed in Beirut. Again, no Initiating Directive was issued and the relationship between the Composite Warfare Commander (CTF 60-RADM Berry) and the Amphibious Force Commander (CTF 61-CAPT Erie) was never clear. CAPT Erie "had neither CATF's unity of command nor his authority."<sup>4</sup> Problems identical to those experienced in Urgent Fury reoccurred. In the vital amphibious mission area of supporting arms, CAPT Erie was again denied the assets needed to accomplish his mission:

At one point, CTF 61 was directed to withhold counterbattery and suppressing fires from the gunships until he had obtained permission to shoot from the ... CTF 60 Anti-Surface Warfare Coordinator (ASUWC) 40 miles seaward in USS TICONDEROGA (CG 47). That Flag officer had no target lists, no target photo intelligence support, no Supporting Arms Coordination Center for controlling naval gunfire, and no direct

communications for monitoring spotter nets. Nonetheless, naval fire support decision authority was given to him in December 1983, rather than to the non-Flag rank Sixth Fleet Amphibious Force Commander with the tools for the job.<sup>5</sup>

The current methodology of providing fire support to landing forces resulted from the many amphibious campaigns of World War II and through the collaboration among the naval warfare communities and allied countries from 1945 until the present day. The requirement for an agency to coordinate fire support in conjunction with an amphibious operation is derived from the after action reports of nearly every World War II amphibious assault and led to the establishment of a Supporting Arms Coordination Center (SACC) onboard the amphibious flagship. The SACC is designed to support the landing force requirements ashore and is equipped with the communications, intelligence resources, and personnel to coordinate the three elements of supporting arms. The Composite Warfare Commander has no such capability.

Doctrine does not dictate how to conduct operations; it provides a basis that represents time-proven principles and ideas of the many professionals who authored and used the doctrine in past campaigns. Had amphibious doctrine been followed, many of the problems experienced in Granada and Beirut could have been avoided. The primary reason amphibious doctrine was not used for these operations is simple: the supported force commander (a Navy captain) was junior to the supporting force commander (a flag officer).

## ENDNOTES

1. John J. Felloney, "Integration of Amphibious and Battle Group/Force Operations--Can the CWC Concept Work?", Naval War College Paper, 14 May 1990, pp. 3-4.
2. R. M. Butler, "Combat's New Rules for Assault Warfare", Naval War College Paper, June 1986, pp. 2-3, 5-7.
3. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Publication 3-02, "Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations", p. 2-3.
4. Anthony E. Mitchell, "Unity of Command in Amphibious Assault", Naval War College Paper, 26 October 1988, p. 11.
5. Butler, p. 6.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT OPERATIONS

Some authors predict that the Grenada and Beirut experiences are not aberrations, but harbingers of future operations and list the following lessons learned from these actions:<sup>1,2</sup>

1. Amphibious task forces can no longer operate as self-contained units controlling their own defenses.

2. The tactical amphibious squadron commander who is CATF for MEU size operations may not have the flagship or staff to conduct an amphibious assault and to defend the amphibious task force.

3. Future U.S. combat actions, including MEU size amphibious operations, will be commanded by Flag and General Officers. The stark lesson of Beirut in this regard is that no officer in the O-6 paygrade can maintain independence of amphibious command in combat today. Overpowering national command interest and highly visible and media intensive combat actions demand the presence of senior commanders. Admiral Metcalf, the commander of the joint task force in Operation Urgent Fury, has frequently stated his conviction that future joint task forces will require a three star officer and his staff

just to handle the volume of questions and data requests from seniors in the chain of command.

4. Forward deployed amphibious ready groups may become institutionalized as tactical forces under the command and responsive to the desires of the carrier battle group CWC.

5. Procedures, integration, interoperability issues, and command relationships between amphibious forces and carrier battle forces are being decided by default in the absence of accepted doctrine.

6. The role of CATF in MEU operations has been transformed and perhaps eliminated. The proliferation of special force components in all services, the compression of planning time available due to the extraordinary speed in which events may develop, and the active role of JCS and the national command authority in structuring such operations (like recent events in Panama) have changed the amphibious planning process.

While these implications appear to be logical conclusions after examining the two MEU-size operations of Grenada and Beirut, caution should be exercised in immediately accepting these results as "harbingers vice aberrations" of future operations. These two scenarios may be so unique that no conclusions regarding command relationships between CWC and CATF should be drawn. In fact, the 1990-1991 Liberia and Somalia



evacuation operations were commanded by a Navy captain and thus already cast doubt on several of the conclusions espoused above by various authors.

Additionally, conclusions drawn from MEU-size operations are not necessarily valid for MEB and MEF size forces:

a. An amphibious force larger than a MEU sails with an LHD or an LHA as the amphibious flagship.\* The LHD has equal or better command and control capabilities than a carrier. LHAs are being backfitted with upgraded command and control suites and are already equipped with LINK-11, the data link essential to the CWC and defense of a task force. Additionally, these flagships contain the command, control, and communication spaces and systems used by the landing force commander prior to the transfer of control ashore. The LPH and LPD, sometimes used by MEU commanders as flagships, do not have these same capabilities.

b. An amphibious group commander is equal in rank to a CVBG commander which avoids the pitfall of having a supporting commander junior to a supported commander.

c. An amphibious group staff is large enough to function independently as CWC while simultaneously conducting an amphibious assault.

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\* An LCC is a ship designed from the keel up as an amphibious flagship; however, they are currently unavailable for amphibious operations because they serve as flagships for numbered fleet commanders.

## ENDNOTES

1. R. M. Butler, "Combat's New Rules for Assault Warfare", Naval War College Paper, June 1986.
2. John J. Felloney, "Integration of Amphibious and Battle group/Force Operations--Can the CWC Concept Work", Naval War College Paper, 14 May 1990, pp. 9-10.

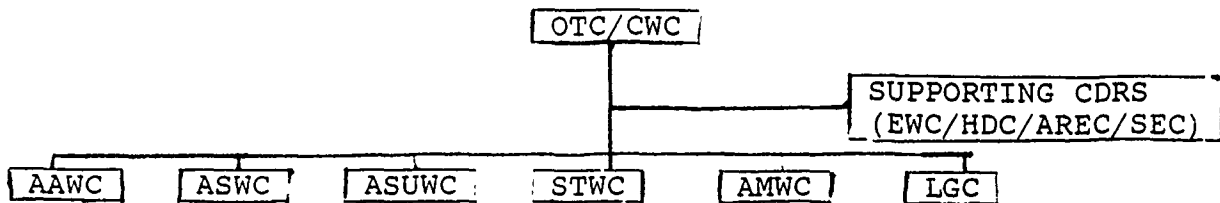
## CHAPTER FIVE

### ATTEMPTED INTEGRATION

TACMEMO's and subsequent doctrine that are written solely on the basis of the seniority of the players in peacetime are doomed to failure; either of themselves or the forces attempting to use them in a war.<sup>1</sup>

Several attempts have been made to resolve the command and control issues between CWC and amphibious doctrine, the most recent and controversial is the COMTHIRDFLT TACMEMO PZ1010-1-88 Composite Warfare Procedures for Amphibious Operations. Proponents of this TACMEMO contend that "naval warfare has changed dramatically since World War II and the Navy must ensure that Composite Warfare Doctrine (NWP 10-1) and Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations (JCS Pub 3-02) reflect those changes."<sup>2</sup> Critics say amphibious doctrine remains valid and is flexible enough to incorporate CWC into it. This chapter will briefly examine both sides of this issue.

The COMTHIRDFLT TACMEMO attempts to fold amphibious doctrine into the CWC concept by making the amphibious task force commander part of the CWC organization. The TACMEMO eliminates the term "CATF" and makes the CWC responsible for the amphibious mission. CATF/CLF become warfare commanders similar to the functional warfare commanders presented in Figure 1. The organization chart below is similar to ones presented in other unclassified publications.<sup>3</sup>



Terms not previously used:

OTC	Officer in tactical command
AAWC	Antiair warfare commander
ASWC	Antisubmarine warfare commander
ASUWC	Antisurface warfare commander
STWC	Strike warfare commander
AMWC	Amphibious warfare commander
LGC	Landing Group commander
AREC	Air element coordinator
HEC	Helicopter element coordinator
SEC	Submarine element coordinator
EWC	Electronic warfare coordinator

Figure 1

Advocates of this TACMEMO present the following rationale for using the revised procedures:

a. A major, doctrinal incompatibility problem between CWC and amphibious doctrines exists that must be resolved.<sup>4,5</sup>

b. The TACMEMO provides unity of command for an amphibious operation and eliminates the need for two separate CWC organizations.<sup>6</sup>

c. With Strike Warfare added, CWC has evolved into a formidable offensive doctrine and it is only natural that it encompasses the power projection inherent in amphibious warfare.

d. Since the OTC is charged with the primary mission of successfully conducting the amphibious operation, he should be more inclined to provide the amphibious commander with the assets he needs to accomplish his mission.

e. Since selection of the commander of the integrated amphibious task force is normally made based on seniority among the two converging task force commanders, the TACMEMO formalizes the relationships instead of letting them develop ad hoc.<sup>7</sup>

f. The TACMEMO resolves the basic problem of defense of the ATF in this era of scarce resources. Additionally, tactical amphibious squadrons are not sufficiently manned or trained to simultaneously conduct an amphibious assault and perform as CWC.

The TACMEMO was discussed in depth at the Seventh Amphibious Warfare Conference held in April, 1989. Only a decision by the conference chairman prevented the conference attendees from recommending cancellation of the TACMEMO because of differences with several doctrinal points in JCS Pub 3-02 that were considered essential to the success of an amphibious operation:<sup>8</sup>

a. Excluding the term "CATF" subordinates amphibious warfare to a second echelon role in situations where the primary mission of the naval force is to establish a landing force ashore

in a hostile or potentially hostile environment. This concept was opposed by both amphibious<sup>9</sup> and CVBG<sup>10</sup> commanders.

b. The TACMEMO places the officer with overall responsibility for the operation in the aircraft carrier and consequently some distance from the amphibious operation. His physical location thus prevents him from being intimately involved in the decision process described in JCS Pub 3-02, particularly as the planning reaches the final stages and the operation is executed.

c. "The establishment of an OTC between the amphibious warfare commander (CATF) and the common superior (FLTCDR) inserts an unnecessary level of command between the officer responsible for accomplishing the mission and the fleet commander."<sup>12</sup> The "real" CATF and CLF (the AMWC and LGC) no longer have an immediate common superior to resolve issues, but have another review level before a common superior is reached. A bureaucratic level of command has been inserted that is not necessary.

COMTHIRDFLT TACMEMO PZ1010-1-90 is in draft form and attempts to reconcile the first edition with amphibious doctrine. In this revised draft, the amphibious warfare commander is now designated CATF, and the term "COMMARFOR" is taken from JCS Pub 5-00.2 and added to the TACMEMO. COMMARFOR is senior to CLF and co-equal to the OTC.

Despite these changes, the new TACMEMO remains unworkable for many of the same reasons discussed at the Seventh Amphibious Warfare Conference for the first version. Most of the rationale presented below is quoted from a point paper reflecting the position of the east coast amphibious group commander and is equally applicable to both versions of the TACMEMO.

- a. The TACMEMO is contrary to the COMSECONDFLT Fighting Instructions which provide for CATF as a battle group commander and CWC in the AOA.
- b. CATF should be responsible for his own defense and not subject to the priorities of another flag officer.
- c. CATF collocated with CLF is in the best position to direct the employment of all forces assigned and must have instantaneous response from the support force.
- d. The TACMEMO addresses only ... an ATF comprised of U.S. navy ships and USMC landing forces. It specifically excludes ... joint and combined operations. This, in and of itself, makes it unacceptable in the Atlantic and European theaters, as well as in NATO, where joint and combined operations in various support situations are the normal way of operating.\* 12

These points will now be discussed one at a time. Firstly, contradicting the COMSECONDFLT Fighting Instructions does not in itself detract from the COMTHIRDFLT TACMEMO. The only item to note is that in final form, the TACMEMO must be accepted by our NATO allies who use the same COMSECONDFLT Fighting Instructions as part of NATO's Striking Fleet.

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\* The deleted sections of this paragraph discuss support situations between battle group commanders and is omitted due to the classification of the discussion. For more information on support situations, see NWP 10-1, ATP1(C), Vol 1, and AXP-5B.)

Secondly, the primary instance when CATF is not suited to provide for his own defense is in a MEU-sized operation. On routine peacetime deployments, an amphibious ready group (ARG) commander has neither the staff or defensive platforms to defend himself. He also is not a flag officer. As stated above, a flag officer acting as CATF in an operation requiring forces larger than a MEU can and should control his own defenses.

Thirdly, although the revised TACMEMO collocates CATF and CLF as per JCS Pub 3-02, the support force is responsible to a commander other than CATF. It also adds a layer of command in the decision-making process. Both these things combine to make the support force less responsive to the needs of CATF.

Finally, the last point speaks for itself. However, the TACMEMO addresses only one support situation and NATO operations are not limited to a single support situation. The support situation discussed in the TACMEMO is best suited for routine peacetime deployments when there is a paucity of resources, a CVBG flag officer and an ATF non-flag officer, and the ARG operating "under the umbrella" of the CVBG.

In addition to the points presented above, the following arguments against the use of the COMTHIRDFLT TACMEMO can be made:

a. Unity of command is in fact not achieved by this TACMEMO:



- The OTC could delegate his CWC functions to his senior CVBG commander. CATF would then have two separate superiors, one for amphibious matters (OTC) and one for non-amphibious matters (CWC).

- During the amphibious assault two commanders, CATF and CWC, in one geographical area are responsible for force movement and defense (assuming CATF has the authority to control forces being used for the ship to shore movement; ie., helos, LCAC, and displacement craft).

b. Although the amphibious commander is once again called "CATF", he is still in the position of a secondary commander when the primary mission of the task force is amphibious in nature. Additionally, he is no longer co-equal to the senior marine officer in the task organization. The bureaucratic level of command established in the first TACMEMO exists.

c. The CWC concept employs command by negation to allow the commander to focus on the "big picture" while leaving the details of warfighting to his functional commanders and coordinators. Additionally, this decentralized control minimizes response time in a fast paced, multi-threat environment. However, a command and control system such as CWC whose basic tenet is command by negation is not the best system for a warfare capability that requires the commander to conduct detailed planning and be responsible for close cooperation among all

participating forces in a complex operation.<sup>13</sup> For example, the amphibious task force commander is responsible for detailed planning regarding allocation of assets, advance force operations, designation of landing sites, supporting arms coordination among naval gunfire, air, and artillery assets, control of airspace in the AOA, extensive communications arrangements, intelligence estimates, targeting, logistic and combat service support, and countless other plans essential to the success of the amphibious operation. As stated in JCS Pub 3-02, "The nature of the amphibious assault necessitates detailed planning at all command levels".<sup>14</sup>

Ultimately, the initiatives to subsume CATF into CWC doctrine may "increase the probability of failure of an amphibious assault because they pay more attention to the smooth functioning of a command and control system rather than to the purpose of the command and control system."<sup>15</sup>

It is important to remember that today's amphibious forces are more than just transport ships. In the words of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General A.M. Gray:

Just as an aircraft carrier is a sea-based airfield, so are amphibious ships the helicopter operating and maintenance bases, the logistics bases and the troop assembly areas and attack positions from which we launch operations. The popular misperception that amphibious ships are simply troop ships by another name reflects ignorance of their actual capabilities and utility.<sup>16</sup>

It follows that CATF is more than a mere ship to shore coordinator. He is responsible for the successful completion of the most complex mission naval forces perform: projecting power by landing forces on a hostile shore and, when required, sustaining that landing force. Existing amphibious doctrine is the proven method of accomplishing that mission, and it is sufficiently flexible to subsume the CWC concept. In the words of many a fine chief petty officer: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

## ENDNOTES

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2. John J. Felloney, "Integration of Amphibious and Battle Group/Force Operations--Can the CWC Concept Work?", Naval War College Paper, 14 May 1990, p. 3.
3. William M. Rakow, "MAGTF Operations with the Fleet in the Year 2000", Marine Corps Gazette, July 1990, p. 18.
4. Steven D. Gilmore, "Bringing Gators into the Fold--A Look at Amphibious Doctrine", Army War College Paper, 02 April 1990, pp. 14-15.
5. Felloney, pp. 19-20.
6. Ibid., pp. 9, 19.
7. Ernest H. Joy, "Integration of the Amphibious Task Force with the Carrier Battle Group", Naval War College Paper, 14 May 1990, p. 5.
8. Fosina, p. 2.
9. COMPHIBGRU TWO dtg 172320 Mar 89
10. COMCARGRU FOUR dtg 032000 Feb 89
11. Fosina, p. 2.
12. Fosina, pp. 2-4.
13. Edward W. Herbert, "Amphibious Warfare and the Composite Warfare Doctrine", Naval War College Paper, 1990, pp. 15-16.
14. JCS Publication 3-02, pp. 3-4.
15. Herbert, p. 15.
16. A. M. Gray, "Reductions in Seapower", p. 3.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Amphibious Warfare is the most complex of military operations. From the outset, amphibious operations must bridge the difficult transition from the sea to land, involving naval and ground forces, and - since the 1930s - air forces. One of the most complex aspects of amphibious or "combined" operations are the command and control of such multi-service, multi-environment activities.<sup>1</sup>

The premise of this paper is that this most "complex aspect of amphibious operations" can be carried out using existing doctrine. Amphibious doctrine is sound, and it is compatible with the CWC concept. In part because of seniority among commanders, amphibious doctrine was set aside in recent operations resulting in a multitude of command and control problems. The correct solution to these problems is to follow amphibious doctrine and invest in CATF the authority and assets required to accomplish his mission regardless of seniority.

The following paragraphs provide recommendations for the conduct of future amphibious operations. These conclusions account for the realities of current naval operations and retain doctrine proven successful in the past.

#### MEU size operations.

The first task listed in Chapter One for amphibious forces is to provide a forward deployed amphibious presence. This task is accomplished using 3-5 amphibious ships with a MEU in an

amphibious ready group commanded by Navy captain. As previously mentioned, the staff of a tactical amphibious squadron is not manned or trained to simultaneously function as CWC and conduct an amphibious operation, nor does he have the assets to do so. The limited assets assigned to the CVBG commander (a flag officer) also forward deployed makes it impossible to defend both task groups individually. The high level command interest and national media attention associated with military operations today preclude assignment of other than a flag officer to combat operations. For these reasons, command relationships similar to those espoused in the COMTHIRDFLT Tacmemo should be adopted for MEU-size operations involving coordinated CVBG/ARG operations. Since a dearth of knowledge regarding amphibious warfare exists on CVBG staffs, both commanders and staffs must get up to speed in this warfare area prior to implementing this concept. Additionally, the TACMEMO should be modified to resolve the issues identified in the previous chapter.

#### MEB size operations.

As noted in Chapter Four, a primary reason for not using amphibious doctrine in MEU-size operations is that the supporting force commander is senior to the supported commander. In MEB or MEF operations, this situation does not exist and amphibious doctrine should be used. CATF should be an amphibious group commander with control of all assets, including airspace, inside the AOA. The command and control relationships established in

JCS Pub 3-02 and NWP 10-1 are flexible enough to accomodate the CWC concept within existing amphibious doctrine.

MEF size operations.

The ideal CATF for a MEF operation would be a three star admiral knowledgeable in amphibious operations who could function as the counterpart to the three star commander of the landing force. On the east coast, the type commander doubles as the MEF commander in the Marine Corps and divides his time between the two commands in peacetime. The navy surface type commanders should do the same as initially envisioned when their type commands were established and the three star amphibious command dissolved. If the duties of the type commander preclude him from functioning as the amphibious task force commander in MEF size operations, a three star admiral familiar with amphibious operations and distinct from the Fleet Commander should assume duties as CATF. He would be located onboard the amphibious flagship and function as CWC within the AOA while the numbered fleet commander retained OTC and CWC duties onboard the fleet flagship in the vicinity of the CVBGs.

The alternative discussed in Chapter Two is to have the numbered fleet commander assume duties as CATF. If this alternative is selected, CWC duties should be delegated to the senior CVBG commander, and OTC/CATF should remain in company with the amphibious task force to properly plan and execute the amphibious operation.

### Conclusion.

Once an officer enters the amphibious forces, it is difficult for him to obtain a transfer to other forces where he may have better chances for promotion because he cannot be spared from this highly specialized field. ... While there are many admirable and very competent officers in the amphibious forces, there is an unfortunate tendency among officers who believe they have a good chance for promotion to flag rank to seek sea employment in other combat types. This is not a healthy condition and it is earnestly hoped it can be corrected.<sup>2</sup>

VADM Richmond Kelly Turner made this statement in 1944; unfortunately, it remains true today. There are few senior naval officers knowledgeable in amphibious warfare to pick up the debate over who should command amphibious operations. As a result, amphibious doctrine was brushed aside in situations that warranted its use.

VADM Vannoy proclaims that "The Marine Corps, nearly two hundred thousand strong, is dedicated to amphibious warfare. The Navy has no such dedication, at least in peacetime."<sup>3</sup> The Navy needs to change this truth. During the Korean War, General Douglas MacArthur said that "the amphibious landing is the most powerful tool we have"<sup>4</sup>, and the United States in the 1990s can not afford to lose this maritime forcible entry capability, or the doctrine that supports it.



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3. Merrill L. Bartlett, Assault from the Sea, p. 402.
4. Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Victory at High Tide, p. 41.

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